



## Senate Approves Feinstein-Hollings Amendment Calling for Multi-Year Funding for Port Security

*-- Ports the 'Soft Underbelly' of our Nation's Homeland Security --*  
March 11, 2004

**Washington, DC** – *The U.S. Senate today unanimously approved an amendment sponsored by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Ernest Hollings (D-SC) calling for port security funding to be administered in such a way as to provide for a stable, predictable and reliable multi-year funding stream.*

*The resolution expresses the Sense of the Senate that:*

- The budget should provide adequate funding for port security projects and adequately implement an effective port security plan*
- The implementation of the budget should permit the provision of Federal funds over multiple years to fund long-term security improvement projects at ports in the United States; and*
- The Secretary of Homeland Security should, as soon as practicable, develop a funding plan for port security that permits funding over multiple years for such projects.*

*The amendment was cosponsored by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Jon Corzine (D-NJ), John Breaux (D-LA), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Joseph Biden (D-DE), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Patty Murray (D-WA), and Bob Graham (D-FL).*

The following is the prepared text of Senator Feinstein's statement:

"I rise today to introduce, along with Senator Hollings of South Carolina, an amendment to the budget resolution to express the sense of the Senate that it is critical that port security funding be administered in such a way as to provide for a stable, predictable and reliable multi-year funding stream.

U.S. Seaports are the soft-underbelly of our nation's system of defense against terrorism. We have beefed up security at our airports, but we have not done nearly enough to increase the security of our seaports. There is no question that our ports represent a critical vulnerability in our national infrastructure.

- The U.S. maritime system includes ports which, in 2001, handled approximately 5,400 ships making more than 60,000 U.S. ports of call. The majority of these ships were foreign owned and foreign crewed
- More than 17,000,000 cargo containers are handled by U.S. ports in a single year.
  - Of these ports the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles are the second and third largest container ports of import in the United States
  - Ranked as ports of export, they are the first and second in the country.
- Maritime commerce is the primary mode of transportation for world trade, with ships carrying more than 80% of world trade by volume.

Disruption of trade flowing through our ports could have a catastrophic impact on both the United States and the world's economies.

Port security improvements involve large-scale complicated construction, changes which will alter the very shape of our ports. Such an effort, like highway construction, or the changes recently made to our airports, cannot be done effectively without a commitment to multi-year funding.

Preparing our ports for the threat of terrorism is a big job that will take a number of years. The only way to responsibly plan for such an undertaking is for the federal government to plan for construction along a time-line longer than 12 months. The fiscal year simply is not the yardstick to be using.

Accordingly, I have introduced a resolution that will make clear that the Senate believes that port security funding must be planned for, and committed to, along a multi-year schedule. The resolution urges the Department of Homeland Security to create a meaningful multi-year funding plan that can address this issue.

This will allow our port security planners to develop improvements that make sense, and can undertake large-scale projects as part of these plans.

Why is this so important? For two reasons:

- First, without multi-year planning we are unlikely to develop comprehensive, well-thought-out plans that are effective. Let us make no mistake about what effective means in this context. I am not speaking about a road being inconvenient, or needing frequent repair. In the context of anti-terrorism, effective means: will it stop a terrorist attack, or mitigate the effects of such an attack should it come? The stakes are life and death, and we cannot afford to limit ourselves to a single-year funding cycle – the results could be terrible.
- Second, even if we are able to put together a plan despite being hobbled by a single-year funding schedule, it is likely that our efforts will be inefficient and wasteful in terms of dollars.

The bottom line is that multi-year funding is the best way, the most efficient way, and in the long run, the most cost-effective way, to address one of the critical issues of national security which face us. Without multi-year funding we will likely be less safe, at greater cost.

I have tried, without success, to work with the Department of Homeland Security on this aspect of port security. For instance, I have recommended that the Department of Homeland Security use 'Letters of Intent,' as have been used for airport security, as a mechanism to provide multi-year funding.

My concern is that here, as in so many areas of homeland security, the stock answer to any problem seems to be to recite the phrase ‘public-private partnership,’ and then to sit back and let the market take care of the problem. The economics behind this approach is dubious at best, non-existent at worst.

It is time to stop gambling with our nation’s safety and commit to the hard work and expense of making our nation safe.”

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